DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 436 517 SP 038 908

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Fitch, Trey; Marshall, Jennifer L. |
| TITLE | The Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers Program: Program Overview and Review of the Literature. |
| PUB DATE | 1999-00-00 |
| NOTE | 9p. |
| PUB TYPE | Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Conflict Resolution; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Interpersonal Competence; *Peace; *Peer Counseling; Problem Solving; Student Behavior; Students |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Peace Education |

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a program overview and review of the literature on the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program (TSPP), which offers peer mediation and conflict resolution to students of all ages. The program features seven steps: creating a cooperative environment; teaching students the nature of conflict; teaching all students the problem solving negotiation procedure; teaching all students to mediate conflict; implementing the TSPP; refining and upgrading resolution skills; and repeating the steps yearly through grade 12. A key barrier to the program's success can be teacher commitment to the TSPP. This can be addressed by displaying administrative support, providing education on the benefits of the program, and having frequent contact with designated trainers. Peer mediation programs can be a significant part of a school's safety plan. Multiple studies have shown that involved students retain the mediation skills, teachers spend less time dealing with student conflict, and administrators can almost eliminate time spent on conflict resolution. While many programs train a few select students to serve as mediators, the TSPP trains all students to be mediators. (Contains 12 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 436 517

# The Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program:

## Program overview and review of the literature

Dr. Trey Fitch

Morehead State University

Dr. Jennifer L. Marshall

Berea College

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Fitch

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP038908

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to provide a program overview and review of the literature for the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers peer mediation program (TSPP). TSPP was one of only a few programs that contained outcomes-based research. Several studies reported that students participating in this program acquired conflict resolution skills, and teachers and administrators reported that less time was spent on resolving student conflict.

# The Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program:

## Program overview and review of the literature

From 1984 to 1994, the homicide rate for adolescents doubled (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998). Homicide ranks as the third leading cause of death for children 10-14 years of age (Fingerhut, 1992). The prevalence of youth violence, along with the more common forms of student conflict such as arguing and fighting, has highlighted a need for conflict resolution skills for children and adolescents. A popular method of training students to resolve conflict is using peer mediators in helping to resolve disputes. The Teaching Students to be Peacemakers (Johnson & Johnson, 1995a) program has been implemented in many schools to reduce the incidence of conflict specifically in the school environment.

## Research on the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program

One of the oldest researched-based violence prevention programs is the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program (TSPP) (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). It began in the 1960s and is currently one of the most researched and evaluated peer mediation and conflict resolution programs. Several studies have validated the effectiveness of the program for all grade levels and different populations. Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward, and Magnuson (1995) found that after TSPP training 45% of the students used appropriate negotiation strategies to resolve conflict and many became more relationship oriented. Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Laginski, and O'Coin (1995) found nearly 50% of the TSPP trained elementary students used the appropriate techniques after 14 weeks. After initiating the TSPP at an elementary school, Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) reported an 80% decrease in teachers having to resolve conflict. Also, there were no reports of principals having to mediate disputes after TSPP program was in place. Meek

(1992) reported results of the peer mediation program in New York and found a 71% drop in physical violence, a 66% reduction in verbal abuse, and that 69% of teachers reported an increase in student cooperation. In another exhaustive study, Roush and Hall (1993) evaluated over 100 elementary students who participated in the TSPP. According to teacher reports there was a dramatic reduction in playground conflict among students.

One study that displayed the effects of TSPP was conducted by Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Acikgoz (1994). They investigated the effects of TSPP with 92 elementary students in grades 1-6. The target population came from a primarily Caucasion Midwestern community. Researchers administered pre and post program surveys to assess frequency and types of classroom conflict. The six week TSPP was conducted where students were taught how to negotiate conflicts amongst themselves. At program completion, teachers reported an 80% reduction in time spent resolving student conflict. Consequently, more classroom time was spent on instruction as a result of less time with managing student conflict.

## Program overview

### Step One: Creating a Cooperative Context

The context in which conflict occurs greatly influences the outcome. Conflict within a competitive context is much more difficult to resolve (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Conflicting parties usually display a lesser capacity to view another perspective and lines of communication are broken. However, within a cooperative context, conflict can be resolved constructively (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). A cooperative school climate enhances communication, problem-solving, and goal-setting. This climate is a prerequisite to the implementation of a peer mediation program. If a competitive school climate exists then peer mediation programs are less

effective.

Appropriate trainers will be identified at target schools. These TSPP trainers will instruct local teachers, administrators, and students on establishing cooperative environments. These environments are best achieved by utilizing cooperative learning strategies in the classroom. Cooperative learning strategies promote more positive relations, a greater level of intrinsic motivation, and gains in self-esteem in participating students (Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R., 1995).

Step Two: Teaching Students the Nature of Conflict

Most students view conflict in terms of anger, hostility, and violence. However, conflict when resolved constructively promotes learning and problem-solving skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Students are taught the definition of conflict, how conflict is resolved constructively, and the value of conflict. These lessons also include conflict simulations and role practice. Lessons are implemented by teachers with the assistance of the TSPP trainers. Consequently, once in place the program becomes part of the normal curriculum and hence self-sufficient.

Step Three: Teaching all Students the Problem-Solving Negotiation Procedure

All students in target schools will taught problem-solving negotiation strategies. Two types of negotiation strategies exist. The first strategy, distributive, utilizes a negotiation with a winner and loser. The second strategy, integrative, seeks to find mutually beneficial solutions. The six steps in the integrative process require students to: 1) describe what they want, 2) describe how they feel, 3) describe reasons for their wants, 4) seeing another's perspective on what they want, 5) inventing three optional plans for resolving the conflict, and 6) choosing one plan and formalizing an agreement. These steps must be practiced by students before being

utilized (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

Step Four: Teaching All Students to Mediate Conflict

The TSPP encourages all students be trained conflict resolution skills. Students are shown and practice the four steps of the negotiation process. The initial step is to end any hostility. For example, if two students are shouting at each other, then a cooling off period would preclude mediation. Gaining a commitment to the mediation process is the second step. Conflicting parties are asked if they want to voluntarily begin mediation, and ground rules for mediation are set. Some of the ground rules include no name calling, listening to the other party, and being as honest as possible. The third step is negotiating a solution to the conflict. Finally, in the fourth step the students formalize a contract to show a commitment to the agreement.

Step Five: Implementing the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program

Once students know the mediation process the teacher begins the TSPP. Daily, two students will be selected to serve as mediators. Any unresolved student conflicts are brought to the mediators. Mediators wear t-shirts indicating their role for the day. If mediation fails with the students the teacher will serve as a mediator. By rotating mediators, all students get to learn and practice the resolution process and gain communication and relationship skills.

Step Six: Refine and Upgrade Resolution Skills

Programs need ongoing reinforcement to be effective (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). The TSPP requires weekly reminders to update and refine negotiation skills. Program success stems from the effectiveness of these skills. The program developers suggest integrating the principles into academic lessons. By integrating into academic lessons, the program supplements the preexisting curriculum as opposed to subtracting from the lessons. For example, in a literature

class, conflicts between characters can be analyzed and negotiation strategies can be discussed by the students. Additionally, role-playing activities are especially encouraged as a method of solidifying negotiation skills.

Step Seven: Repeat Steps Yearly

Retraining is a critical element to the TSPP. It is a revolving program instituted in grades 1-12 with each year growing in sophistication. It is a false notion that simple one-shot programs can have long-term meaningful effectiveness. The program to be effective must be integrated into the daily classroom structure (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

A key barrier to this pilot's success will be teacher commitment to the TSPP. This commitment can be addressed by the display of administrative support, education on the benefits of the program, and frequent contact with the designated trainers.

## Summary

Peer mediation programs can be a significant part of a school's safety plan. Although a plethora of programs are available, few peer mediation models contain the research support shown for the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program. Multiple studies have shown that students retain the mediation skills, that teachers spend less time dealing with student conflict, and that administrators can almost eliminate their time spent on conflict resolution. Additionally, while many programs use a few select students to serve as mediators, this program trains all students to be mediators. The major components of the program are creating a cooperative climate, teaching negotiation skills, teaching mediation skills, implementing the program, and then providing follow-up training.

References

Elliot, D. S., Hamburg, B. A. & Williams, K. R. (1998). Violence in American school: A new perspective. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press.

Fingerhut, L. A. (1992). Firearm and nonfirearm homicide among persons 15 through 19 years of age. Journal of the American Medical Association, 267, 3048-3053.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1995). Teaching students to be peacemakers. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1995). My mediation notebook. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1995). Why violence prevention programs don't work- and what does. Educational Leadership, 52, 63-68.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1996). Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in Elementary and Secondary School: A review of research. Review of Educational Research, 66, 459-506.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., & Dudley, B. (1992). Effects of peer mediation training on elementary school students. Mediation Quarterly, 10, 89-99.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., Dudley, B. & Acikgoz, K. (1994). Effects of conflict resolution training on elementary school students. Journal of Social Psychology, 134, 803-817.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., Dudley, B. & Magnuson, D. (1995). Training of elementary school students to manage conflict. Journal of Social Psychology, 135, 673-686.

Meek, M. (1992). The peacekeepers. Teaching Tolerance, 3, 46-52.

Roush, G., & Hill, E. (1993). Teaching peaceful conflict resolution. Mediation Quarterly, 11, 185-191.

Stevahn, L., Johnson, D. W., Johnson,D., Laginski,A., & O'Coin, I. (1995). In D. W. Johnson & R. Johnson's Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in elementary and secondary schools: A review of research. Review of Educational Research, 66, 459-506.